

SOUTHEASTERN

By Becky Marsh

Nature's Economic Gift

Southeastern Utah is a welcoming community for growth, development and diversity. Although the economy in the area was once limited to agriculture and geology, the region is now open to new business opportunities. Because of its many outdoor offerings, Southeastern Utah is often considered a capital for tourism in Utah. Millions of people travel to the region each year to explore the many state and national parks. Some adventure seekers climb or bike the rugged red cliffs near Moab, while others of a more amphibious nature enjoy the warm waters of Lake Powell. Southeastern Utah's four captivating counties each offer something different for visitors and residents in the area.

CARBON COUNTY: COLLEGES TO COAL

With more than 20,000 people, Carbon County is the most populous in the region and home to one of the largest cities in Southeastern Utah. Price, the county seat of Carbon, has a population of well over 8,000 people—almost half of the county's population. Carbon is famous for a number of things, including its coal, its fascinating landscape and John Bracken Lee, who served the state as one of the most active governors. Although Lee lived in Salt Lake City during his tenure in office—from 1948 to 1956—he never stopped calling Price his home.

Since 1894, when the Carbon County was settled, this region has proved to be abundant in high-quality coal. Coal mining companies ran Carbon for several years, building its cities and dictating most of the decisions that were made. The coal mining industry is still a major factor in the growth and development of the economy, providing nearly 1,000 jobs.

Another leading player in Carbon's economy is the College of Eastern Utah. CEU is located in Price and is also a leading attraction in this area, employing approximately 1,000 people. Another large employer is the Carbon County School District, which employs upwards of 900 people.

FAST FACTS:

Counties: Carbon, Emery, Grand, San Juan

Major Cities: Price (8,197), Moab (4,825), Blanding (3,056), Huntington (2,066)

Regional Civilian Labor Force: 23,609

Per Capita Income: \$20,047 (Carbon), \$19,977 (Emery), \$21,685 (Grand), \$13,637 (San Juan)

Top Private-Sector Employers: Canyon Fuels Company, Energy West, PacifiCorp, Monument Valley Lodge

Average Sale Price of Homes, Third Quarter 2004: Carbon/Emery \$84,314, Grand/San Juan \$156,163



JOHN WESLEY POWELL RIVER HISTORY MUSEUM

Several Utah Smart Site businesses have also sprung up throughout the county, leveraging the benefits of this state-funded program to help small businesses in rural areas. "We are trying to promote the area to outside companies while also trying to grow local small businesses," says Delynn Fielding, director of Economic Growth and Development for the county. The Southeastern Utah Association of Local Governments also offers help to small businesses in the area by educating the public about tax breaks, federal assistance and other resources available to them.

EMERY COUNTY: RECREATIONAL AND GEOLOGIC HAVEN

Diverse recreational and economic opportunities continue south to Carbon's neighboring Emery County. Before other settlers made it their home in the late 1800s, Ute Indians occupied the area. Many who traveled the old Spanish trail to California would tell of the phenomenon that is now known as "the castles" of castle country. The landscape within

this county is famously picturesque, especially the Green River area and the San Rafael Swell. The area's rugged terrain offers extraordinary experiences to thousands of visitors each year.

While tourism is significant in Emery County, geology-related economic opportunities are rapidly expanding as well. Every year Castle Dale, the county seat for Emery, hosts the annual Regional Economic Summit. The most recent economic news from the area is reported in the county's newspaper, the Emery County Progress. Oil drilling permits in this region have made a huge leap, says John Baza, director for the Division of Oil, Gas, and Mining: "High prices have spurred a lot of drilling activity. In 1992 and 1993, we issued 100 permits...by mid-September of this year we already surpassed last year's drilling permits and are projecting 1,500 permits for 2005."

Although oil production is certainly on the rise in the county, coal mining has been the leading economic force for many years. Within Emery, three separate coal mining

companies provide more than 500 jobs. According to the Emery County Website, Ferron's Coalbed Methane Fairway, one of the major players, has three fields, 452 wells and has produced 200 billion cubic feet of gas. Emery County produced 6 percent of the natural gas used in Utah in 2003.

GRAND COUNTY: EXTREME LANDSCAPES, EXTREME SPORTS

Grand County is a recreational playground for many outdoor enthusiasts. With an abundance of trails to bike, mountains to climb and rivers to raft it is no wonder that tourism is a major economic force in this county. The county seat, Moab, is home to more than 5,000 of the 8,600 people reportedly living in Grand County in 2004.

A veritable Mecca to back-country explorers and mountain-bike enthusiasts around the world, Moab's outdoor offerings are endless. Each March, the city hosts a Jeep Safari, which kicks off the summer season and provides a standard of fun, excitement and revenue. Tourists reign from April through October, while local establishments enjoy the profits. With Arches National Park located just minutes from Moab, tourism is the clear leader in economic growth throughout Grand County. However, those lovers of sun and adventure are not the only visitors that bring earnings to Southeastern Utah.

Hollywood fell in love with the area's fascinating landscapes decades ago. Numerous movies and advertisements have been shot in this area, and many directors continue to come back because of the spectacular surroundings. The Moab to Monument Valley Film Commission works with directors to promote Utah's unique surroundings as well, which in turn boosts local businesses. If film producers are in need of any extra crew members, hairstylists, make-up artists, caterers or specific locations, the Film Commission is eager to help.

Grand County is also home to other types of businesses that bring economic diversity to the community. One such company, founded by Mitchell May, is the EPA-award-

winning Synergy Production Laboratories (SPL). SPL prides itself on manufacturing and distributing certified organic and kosher products across the United States and around the world, including Japan, Germany, France and Canada, among others. Consumers can also order SPL product on the companies Web site. SPL has been doing business in Grand County for 15 years and still calls Moab home. "The environment reflects consistency to our customers, and the dry air here is helpful, as it is difficult to manufacture these products in high humidity," says May, who is committed to giving back to the community. "Living where you desire to be is personally satisfying, and this is a great place to raise a family."

Synergy is one of companies to build its success in Grand County. Among the others are Footprints, Inc., a custom software developer with clients in multiple locations throughout the U.S.; Zeal Optics, a manufacturer of sunglasses; and Earth Studies Media Art, a unique sculpturing company. Ken Davey, director of economic development in Grand County, says, "People choose to develop their businesses here because of the lifestyle and the quality of life Grand County offers."

SAN JUAN COUNTY: MESMERIZING LANDSCAPES AND OPPORTUNITIES

San Juan County is a blend of adventure and mesmerizing landscapes, featuring some of the very best of Utah's Canyon Country. This area is home to several national parks, state parks, natural bridges and Navajo Tribal Parks. Until the late 1800s, the area was occupied almost exclusively by the Navajo Indian tribes. The Navajo nation still occupies much of the land today; museums, sacred monuments and even a sewing factory continue to provide much of the area's distinctive culture.

Like much of the Southeastern part of the state, San Juan County's economy is built mainly around tourism, with agriculture and mining also playing a role. With such beautiful areas as Lake Powell, Canyonlands National Park and Monument Valley,

this county exhibits some of nature's most distinctive beauty, bringing in tourists and dollars.

San Juan County school district is one of the largest employers in the area, along with the College of Eastern Utah's Blanding campus and San Juan Hospital. A variety of small businesses bring jobs and character to this area, including Second Nature Wilderness program. This company, which has several locations around the country, employs physicians, clinical psychologists, counselors and others who extend a needed hand to struggling youth.

Blue Mountain Shadows of Blanding also calls the redrock of San Juan County home. This unique magazine has been recording the history and folklore of San Juan County since 1986. A unique business in Monticello, Bull Hollow Raceway is a motocross racetrack built on top of old farmland. Bull Hollow brings fun and excitement to the region, and hosts national competitions for racers of all levels.

Southeastern Utah is open to growth, development and diversity. The peaceful surroundings, clean environments and wealth of opportunity found here make it extremely attractive for any business to lay down its roots. Whether you are an agricultural guru, adventure junkie or simply a lover of nature, this region has room for you, your business, your creativity and your family.

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